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with the work of the State Debris Commission. It will also be of great value in connection with problems for the reclamation of swamps and for irrigation. The work of the year included the mapping of Elmira, Karquinez, Clarksburg, Rio Vista and Montezuma atlas sheets, chiefly in Solano County, with small portions lying in Yolo and San Joaquin Counties. Some detailed work was done on the Yosemite Special sheet in Mariposa County. This work was on the scale of 2,000 ft. to 1 inch. In Kern and Tulare Counties the Kernville quadrangle on the two-mile scale, had its area completely mapped, covering a total of 1,000 square miles.

AN ETHNOLOGIST IN EAST GREENLAND.

Dr. W. Thalbitzer, who has recently returned from a long visit to East Greenland, where he has been studying the natives and their language, has written an account of his sojourn among them which appears in *Petermanns Mitteilungen* (No. XI, 1906). From June 1, 1905, when his wife and he sailed for Greenland, they were entirely out of touch with the rest of the world. Angmagsalik, the only inhabited place on the east coast, is visited by a ship only once a year, and this ship, with its postal service established by Denmark in 1894, makes the voyage not directly from Europe but after touching on the west Greenland coast.

Dr. Thalbitzer landed from Denmark in the Egedesminde colony on the west coast, below 69° N., and lived there for two months until the steamer *Godthaab* sailed for East Greenland on Aug. 17. His wife took with her a west Greenland Eskimo woman as a servant, the first native woman of that coast to visit the East Coast Eskimos. The weather was very stormy, but in fourteen days the vessel lay off Angmagsalik in about $65^{\circ} 30'$ N. The polar current, packed with ice, was between them and the coast, and seemed to be unusually wide for the time of year. On the first day they lay about 30 kilometers from the land, but the position of the ice changed every day and for eight days the vessel was from 20 to 100 kilometers off shore. A favourable opportunity was improved on the ninth day to make way through the ice to the coast.

Angmagsalik derives its name from a large fiord to the north of Cape Dan, which, in the native speech, is called Ammattalik, meaning the place of the ammattä or caplin (*mallotus villosus*). The Danish Government established a trading station here in 1894 upon

a small island. The harbour is in a little fiord surrounded by a chain of wild and partly snow-covered mountains.

The Danish official, Johann Petersen, was awaiting the newcomers. His wife and he, with their little son, are the only Europeans living on this isolated coast. Their only connection with the outer world is the annual ship, whose arrival is more or less uncertain and whose visit is only for a few days—just long enough to take on board the fox and bear skins which the Eskimos have collected. The entire district has only about 450 inhabitants.

The Angmagsalik Eskimos were discovered by the Danish naval officer, G. Holm, who spent the winter of 1883-84 among them and specially studied their characteristics. In many respects they are more highly developed than their west coast cousins and have the advantage of being still unspoiled by the whites, and therefore they are better off. They have a rich hunting district in the great fiords around Cape Dan, the Ammattalik, Sermilik and Kangerdlugsuatsiak fiords. Polar bears by the hundreds are found along this coast in winter, the drift ice being an important agency in bringing them there. The sea is rich in various kinds of seals. White and blue foxes are in considerable numbers, but there are no other mammals.

Most of the East Greenlanders are still heathen, but since 1900 two West Greenlanders have lived among them as missionaries. Dr. Thalbitzer had spent the winter of 1900-1 among the west coast natives, and studied their dialects. His visit to Angmagsalik was under the auspices of the "Commission for Geological and Geographical Investigations in Greenland," and his special task was to study the speech and the folk lore of the Angmagsalik natives. A considerable amount of this information had already been collected by Holm (*vide* Meddelelser om Grönland 1888, Vol. X). Thalbitzer has now lived among these people, visiting them in their winter houses and their summer tents, studying their intellectual range and their ways of life, and recording their traditions.

Two heathen priests (angakit) are still influential among them. Two others have been converted to Christianity and one has been baptized. Most of the natives still believe in the existence of spirits, moon gods and mermaids (who rule over the destinies of bears and seals), and in a whole world of other mythical persons and peoples. They have many amulets in their houses, wear them on their clothing and weapons and put much faith in charms and forms of incantation which, they say, have come down to them from their fathers. The old Eskimo drum songs are still everywhere heard in these fiords.

Dr. Thalbitzer collected over 150 folk and child songs, a number of remarkable magic formulas and many proverbs and tales in the native speech. He secured phonographic records of much of the linguistic material. The angakoks or priests gave him much information concerning religious and other traditions. In the course of the winter, Mrs. Thalbitzer, who is a sculptor, modelled many busts and statuettes in wax from which to produce ethnological figures for the museums. The scientific results of this journey will be published in the *Meddelelser om Grönland* during the present year.

ERICHSEN'S EAST GREENLAND EXPEDITION.

The Duke of Orleans announced early in January that he intended to send the polar exploring vessel *Belgica* to the East Greenland coast next summer to co-operate, in every way possible, with the expedition commanded by L. Mylius Erichsen. The latter left Copenhagen for East Greenland June 24, 1906, with supplies for two years. As is well known, Erichsen's purpose is, first of all, to complete the outlining of the east coast from Cape Bismarck to Independence Bay, discovered by Peary in 1892; to send a party north over the sea ice to attain the north pole, if possible; to make a sledge journey along the northern coast of Greenland in order to complete the exploration of Peary Channel, which separates the mainland from the archipelago north of it; to explore other parts of the east coast south of Cape Bismarck which are not yet satisfactorily mapped; and to study the nature and phenomena of the inland ice, and probably to cross the ice cap to the west coast about half way between the north and south ends of the island.

This long programme may, of course, be subject to many vicissitudes, but if the expedition has good fortune the close of the exploring season in 1908 will see a great deal of work accomplished and the party on their way home.

The Duke of Orleans' voyage in the *Belgica* in the summer of 1905 (*Bull. Amer. Geog. Soc.*, 1906, No. 12, pp. 721-729), along the east coast extended to the north of the 78th parallel, about 120 miles north of Cape Bismarck, but he saw only stretches of the Greenland coast, and Erichsen's survey will really begin from south of Cape Bismarck.

Perhaps no other Arctic expedition has been more carefully planned than that of Erichsen. Among the twenty-six men in his